

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Colorado River Basin



May 2017 Executive Officer's Report

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## Activities and Events Hosted by Region 7:

- **May 19<sup>th</sup>**—Following the Regional Water Board meeting, staff hosted new State Water Board member Mr. Joaquin Esquivel for a meet-and-greet session with the Regional water Board's staff. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **May 24<sup>th</sup>**—Frank Gonzalez, Hilda Vasquez, and Jose L. Angel hosted State Water Board Division of Administrative Services (DAS) Chief John Russell, DAS Deputy Assistant Bill Damien, and State Water Board Human Resources (HR) Chief Chris Fernandez to discuss the State Water Board's proposed consolidation of HR services at the State Water Board's HR Branch. During the meeting, Regional Water Board staff asked for State Water Board assistance to expedite the upgrades to the Regional Water Board room. [*Hilda Vasquez, SSM I*]
- **May 30<sup>th</sup>** - Maria Davydova hosted a Salton Sea Outreach Committee meeting at the Region 7 Office. Conference Room. The meeting was attended by seven outreach committee members and two associates in person, with four committee members joining via conference call. Region 7 Salton Sea Coordinator Jeff Geraci was also in attendance. The main objective of the meeting was to review the draft flyer prepared by Burke Rix Communications, contracted by CNRA for outreach activities. The committee also reviewed the workshop dates and locations presented on the flyer and discussed next steps including noticing and other workshop collateral materials. Currently, there are seven community workshops scheduled tentatively, spanning from June 13 until July 13, 2017. [*Maria Davydova, ES*]

## Key Policy Correspondence and Orders Issued on Behalf of the Board

- **May 5<sup>th</sup>**--Regional Water Board staff prepared and submitted comments regarding the proposed project description and scope of work for the Whitewater River Groundwater Replenishment Facility Right-of-Way (ROW) permit application—an application submitted by Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). CVWD is requesting to renew and amend the BLM ROW Permit to use the formerly permitted area (509 acres) as well as additional area (431 acres) for access, operation and maintenance of groundwater replenishment activities using Colorado River water delivered to the replenishment facility through the Colorado River Aqueduct Turnout. CVWD also proposes to increase the amount of Colorado River water recharged at the facility from a historical average of 67,360 acre feet per year (AFY) to 511,000 AFY. The Whitewater River Groundwater Replenishment Project is subject to the requirements outlined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The BLM and CVWD are planning to submit the notice of intent (NOI) in October 2017 and conduct CEQA scoping meetings in November and December 2017. [*Cathy Sanford, EG, PG*]
- **May 20<sup>th</sup>**—The Executive Officer sent a letter to the City of Brawley stating the Regional Water Board's position regarding One World Beef's proposed increase on the volume of pretreated wastewater discharged from One World Beef into the City's Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTW). OWB is in compliance with the City's Pretreatment Program and requested authorization from the City to increase its volume of wastewater discharged into the POTW from 200,000 to 300,000 gallons per day (gpd). The letter states that the POTW should be able to handle the proposed increase and a subsequent increase from 300,000 to 400,000 gpd. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]

- **May 23<sup>rd</sup>**—The Executive Officer issued Technical Orders to all of the Whitewater River Watershed SM4 Permittees (Phase 1 Stormwater Permittees) requesting the permittees to submit proposed plans to comply with the State Water Board statewide Water Quality Control Plans to address Trash. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **May 24<sup>th</sup>**—The Regional Water Board staff submitted written comments on the proposed scope of the CEQA document for CVWD's proposed Groundwater Replenishment Project at Wastewater Reclamation Plant # 10 (WRP10). CVWD proposes to expand its WRP10 secondary effluent storage pond area to optimize the production and delivery of tertiary treated recycled water produced at WRP10. It also proposes to repurpose existing secondary effluent ponds at WRP10 into groundwater replenishment basins and construct additional groundwater detention basins within the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel south of WRP10 to facilitate groundwater replenishment of approximately 25,000 AFY of imported Colorado River water. [*Cathy Sanford, EG, PG*]

### New River Pollution from Mexico

- **May 12<sup>th</sup>**—Frank Gonzalez met with US Customs and Border Protection Logistics Director, Dirk Saar, in Imperial to discuss the New River Improvement Project Trash Screen component. [*Frank Gonzalez, AEO, P.E.*]
- **May 17<sup>th</sup>**—Jose Angel had a teleconference with Ms. Aimee Barnes, a policy advisor to Governor Brown, regarding the New River Improvement Project and the sewage infrastructure problems in Mexicali. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **May 17<sup>th</sup>**—Jose Angel participated in a meeting of CalEPA's Solid Waste Work Group to discuss trash and other solid wastes from Mexico that are adversely impacting waters in California, including the New River. Other meeting participants included representatives from Mexico, CalEPA, the San Diego Water Board, and CalRecycle. The Work Group will be making recommendations to the California-Mexico Border Relations Council to work cooperatively with Mexico to deal with the problem. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **May 18<sup>th</sup>**—Frank Gonzalez prepared and submitted to State Water Board the scope of work to contract out engineering services for the design of the Phase 1 of the New River Improvement Projects for Calexico. [*Frank Gonzalez, AEO, P.E.*]
- **May 18<sup>th</sup>**—Adriana Nunez, Frank Gonzalez, and Jose Angel met with representatives from CalEPA, Imperial Irrigation District, Imperial County, and City of Calexico in Calexico to discuss a Memorandum of Agreement among local agencies (IID, County, and City of Calexico) for the implementation of Phase I of the New River Improvement Project for the Calexico area. [*Frank Gonzalez, AEO, P.E.*]
- **May 19<sup>th</sup>**—Frank Gonzalez participated in the Binational Observation Tour of the New River in Mexicali. [*Frank Gonzalez, AEO, P.E.*]
- **May 19<sup>th</sup>**—Chair Wright and Jose Angel met with Francisco Paredes (Comision Estatal De Servicios Publicos de Mexicali Director) and representatives from the NADBank/BECC in Mexicali to discuss elimination of bypasses of raw sewage from Mexicali into the New River and funding needs to address the sewage infrastructure problems in Mexicali. NadBank/BECC representatives provided an overview of the

NADBank/BECC binational projects certification criteria and process for the upcoming Federal Year. Following this meeting, Chair Wright and Mr. Angel joined the meeting of the Binational Technical Committee for the New River/Mexicali Sanitation Project. [Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.]

## Groundwater Protection Activities

- **May 4<sup>th</sup>**—Jose Cortez and Frank Gonzalez met with representatives from Hi-Desert Water District and USGS to discuss the proposed groundwater monitoring network for the District's proposed groundwater recharge project. [Frank Gonzalez, AEO, P.E.]
- **May 10<sup>th</sup>**—Regional Water Board staff attended the CEQA Public Scoping Meeting regarding for CVWD's proposed Groundwater Replenishment Project at Wastewater Reclamation Plant #10 (WRP10) in Palm Desert. [Cathy Sanford, EG, PG]
- **May 24<sup>th</sup>**—Regional Water Board staff had a teleconference with Diane Barclay and Scott Seyfried, former and new State Board Salt-Nutrients Management Plan (SNMP) State Water Board Leads. Staff provided updates on the SNMPs for Twentynine Palms, Mojave area, Borrego Springs, Imperial Valley, Needles, and Coachella Valley. Diane Barclay noted that Coachella Valley had low priority regarding the USGS Municipal Well sampling program due to naturally low concentrations of TDS in the basin. She stated, however, that she will look into moving up the priority as the need exists to facilitate completion of the Coachella Valley SNMP. [Cathy Sanford, EG, PG]

## Other Policy and Program Meetings

- **May 2<sup>nd</sup>**—Mary Serra, Doug Wylie, and Jennie Snyder met with representatives of the Earthrise Nutritionals LLC Spirulina algae harvesting facility, which is near Calipatria. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss permitting a proposed double-lined 2.5-acre evaporation pond adjacent to other existing disposal ponds. The representatives delivered a Report of Waste Discharge (ROWD) for the project during the meeting. Regional Water Board staff is reviewing the information to prepare a response within 30 days of receipt of the ROWD. [Jennie Snyder, WRCE, P.E.]
- **May 2<sup>nd</sup>**—Doug Wylie and Jose Cortez met with Marcus Fuller, City of Palm Springs Assistant City Manager/City Engineer and his staff and consultants to discuss Tentative Board Order R7-2017-0013 that updates the city's Wastewater Treatment Plant Waste Discharge Requirements (permit). The city submitted extensive comments on the Tentative Order on May 18 that are posted on the Board's website. Staff is currently preparing responses to the city's comments and others received during the 30-day public comment period in preparation for a hearing on the matter on June 30, 2017. [Jose Cortez, WRCE, P.E.]
- **May 3<sup>rd</sup>**—Jennie Snyder participated in the quarterly Land Disposal Program Roundtable meeting by teleconference. Key topics discussed at the meeting included: the Composting General Order Report to the State Water Board, potential illegal land application site information, and program updates from the Regional Water Boards. [Jennie Snyder, WRCE, P.E.]
- **May 3<sup>rd</sup>**—Phan Le attended the Underground Storage Tank (UST) Roundtable Meeting via teleconference. Cleanup fund news and updates on funding were the main topics of

discussion. State Water Board staff indicated that fiscal year 2017/2018 budgets for the cleanup programs should not change significantly from the previous fiscal year.

[Phan Le, WRCE]

- **May 5<sup>th</sup>**—Regional Water Board staff held a teleconference with State Water Board staff to discuss a *Path to Closure Plan* and emergency funding for an underground storage tank (UST) petroleum release located in Lucerne Valley, CA. The responsible party has exhausted its funding for cleaning up the site, but the site still needs further remediation. Staff is working with State Board to identify additional funding. Staff is also sending a letter requesting the responsible party submit a work plan for the additional remediation. [Theresa Kimsey, ES]
- **May 8<sup>th</sup>**—Regional Water Board staff held a teleconference with Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) and its consultant to discuss PVID's closure request for an UST petroleum release located at 180 14<sup>th</sup> Street W, Blythe, CA. Staff is sending a letter requiring PVID to collect and analyze confirmation samples to determine if residual contaminant concentrations remaining at the site meet Low-Threat UST Case Closure Policy (LTCP) criteria. [Phan Le, WRCE]
- **May 12<sup>th</sup>**—Regional Water Board staff held a teleconference with ES Engineering, who represent the site's responsible party, to discuss additional remedial activities for a UST release in Holtville, CA. The responsible party is proposing to reduce residual soil and groundwater contaminants to acceptable levels using in situ chemical oxidation. [Theresa Kimsey, ES]
- **May 17<sup>th</sup>**—Regional Water Board staff held a teleconference with State Water Board staff to discuss closure of a UST release in Calexico. In this and previous meetings, Regional Board staff expressed concerns that the site fails to meet all the LTCP closure criteria, given that free product is still present in clay soil. In spite of this, State Water Board staff is advocating for closure, and preparing closure documents. [Kola Olatunbosun, WRCE]
- **May 18<sup>th</sup>**—Jose Angel met with representatives from the Governor Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) and the City of Brawley, in Imperial, to discuss the status of the One World Beef (OWB) proposed BioFiltro plant. He also met separately with representatives of OWB in Brawley to discuss the same matter. [Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.]
- **May 18<sup>th</sup>**—Regional water Board staff attended the Salton Sea Authority meeting. Phil Rosentrater reported that the Authority and College of the Desert are working together to get the community more involved in the restoration effort, with plans for an "education research center," which is expected to begin next year. Grants will be needed to support the Center. California Audubon is working on an interactive visitors map for birders at Salton Sea. Also noted a decline in observed Cormorants. Bruce pointed out that there's an overall decline of fish-eating birds, adding that deep water habitat construction is questionable. Audubon is also working on a comprehensive bird monitoring program at the Salton Sea to strengthen up consistency on bird data. [Jeff Geraci, ES]
- **May 23<sup>rd</sup>**—Jose Angel met with GO-Biz Director Ms. Panorea Advis to discuss the status of the OWB BioFiltro Project. [Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.]

- **May 24<sup>th</sup>**—Doug Wylie and Jose Cortez met with the engineer for Sage Estates, a proposed 107-unit residential subdivision in Yucca Valley. The proposed facility will be enrolled in the State Water Board Order WQ 2014-0153-DWQ General Waste Discharge Requirements for Small Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems. Staff is currently preparing the draft Notice of Applicability for enrollment in the General Order. [*Jose Cortez, WRCE, P.E.*]
- **May 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>**—Nadim Shukry-Zeywar attended the TMDL Roundtable meeting in San Luis Obispo. Key topics discussed in the meeting included: Program updates from Regional Water Boards, State Board, and USEPA representatives; Planning for discretionary contracts for 3 years in addition to the existing one year contracts; Updates on state-wide planning projects, including mercury objectives (adopted and delivered to USEPA), toxicity (scheduled for public review Nov 2017 and adoption May 2018), and Bacteria (scheduled for public review June 27, 2017, State Water Board workshops in July, and State Water Board adoption in December 2017); and an update from Region 3 staff on the Pyrethroid pesticides TMDL lawsuit. There was also a field trip to Jim May Lake Park BioFilter and Oso Falco Lake Bioreactor. [*Nadim Shukry-Zeywar, Senior ES*]
- **May 25<sup>th</sup>**—Regional Water Board staff held a teleconference with Santec Consultants to discuss remediation needed to close the UST release at a site in Indio. This site recently received funding from the Emergency, Abandoned, and Recalcitrant (EAR) Account, after being inactive for over two years. [*Phan Le, WRCE; and Theresa Kimsey, ES*]
- **May 26<sup>th</sup>**—Doug Wylie and Jennie Snyder met with staff from San Bernardino County's Public Works Department to discuss expansion of the Landers Class III Landfill and Class II Surface Impoundments, and updating Board Order R7-2009-0063 to reflect the expansion and other changes in operation. [*Jennie Snyder, WRCE, P.E.*]
- **May 30<sup>th</sup>**—Maria Davydova represented the Regional Water Board at the Safeguarding California Plan Workshop in Coachella. The California Natural Resources Agency's (CNRA) held the workshop as part of a series of statewide workshops seeking public comment on the State's strategy for adapting to climate change. CNRA is looking for scientists focusing on climate change in the region to provide input on best available climate change science for the desert region. The draft Plan update and supporting materials are available at <http://resources.ca.gov/climate/safeguarding/>. [*Maria Davydova, ES*]
- **May 31<sup>st</sup>**—Regional Water Board staff held a teleconference with State Water Board Cleanup Fund staff to discuss the path to closure for a UST release from a site in El Centro. [*Phan Le, WRCE*]
- **May 31<sup>st</sup>**—Regional Water Board staff held a teleconference with State Water Board Staff to discuss a Project Execution Plan (PEP) and path to closure for a UST release from a site in Mecca. [*Kola Olatunbosun, WRCE*]

## Outreach and Education Activities

- **May 26<sup>th</sup>**—Regional Water Board staff participated on Career Day at Van Buren Elementary School in Indio and presented on careers in geology to First through Fourth Grade students. [*Cathy Sanford, PG*].



- **May 12<sup>th</sup>**—Jose L. Angel participated at a Water Forum sponsored by UC Riverside, where he presented an overview of water in California, with emphasis on transboundary issues and climate change implications for water resources along the US-Mexico Border, including the Colorado River. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **May 19<sup>th</sup>**—Jeff Geraci represented the Regional Board and gave science presentations to 54 students at Sacred Heart School for their career day event. [*Jeff Geraci, ES*]

## Management Meetings

- Regional Water Board Executive staff and supervisors met weekly throughout May 2017. The main issues discussed during the meetings included status of workload commitments and Board priorities, upcoming Board meetings and workshops, vacancies, and staff's performance appraisals for SFY 2016-17. [*Frank Gonzalez, AEO, P.E.*]

## Environmental Justice

- **May 4<sup>th</sup>**—Maria Davydova participated via conference call in the monthly CalEPA Environmental Justice Liaisons meeting. CalEPA staff reminded the liaisons that CalEPA has an EJ Calendar where to the liaisons can submit their EJ related events, including workshops and symposiums. Region 7 staff provided an update on recent EJ activities in the region. State Water Board staff announced the upcoming release of the updated "*Citizen's Guide to Working with Water Boards*," which is now available at [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/publications\\_forms/publications/general/docs/citizenguide.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/publications_forms/publications/general/docs/citizenguide.pdf). [*Maria Davydova, ES*]
- **May 18<sup>th</sup>**—Jose Figueroa-Acevedo represented the Board at the Imperial Valley Environmental Task Force meeting in El Centro. The main topics discussed during the meeting continued to be air pollution problems in the Imperial Valley. [*Jose Figueroa-Acevedo, WRCE*]
- **May 24, 2017**—Maria Davydova represented the Regional Water Board in the Coachella Valley Environmental Justice Task Force monthly meeting in Indio. The meeting was brief and focused on updates from the agency representatives that were present. City of Coachella staff announced the 2017 Coachella Valley rebate programs for retrofitting and abandoning groundwater wells and for rehabilitating septic systems for disadvantaged citizens. Applications are due to the City on June 9<sup>th</sup> and are available at <http://cvwd.org/217/Rebates-Discounts>. The rebates are part of Coachella Valley's Integrated Regional Water Management grant. [*Maria Davydova, ES*]

## Staff Training and Professional Development

- **May 22<sup>nd</sup>**—Groundwater Protection Division staff participated in the State Water Board's webinar training on Construction Quality Assurance Programs for Containment Projects presented by consultant Richard Thiel, P.E. [*Doug Wylie, Senior WRCE, P.E.*]
- **May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup>**—Jose Angel attended training on Financial Aspects of Enforcement Actions in Sacramento. The training was provided by IEC, a USEPA contractor. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]



## Other Salient Events

- **May 3<sup>rd</sup>**—Regional Board staff collected upper-soil core samples from the Salton Sea as part of a study to characterize crust-like formations on exposed playa. [*Jeff Geraci, ES*]
- **May 3<sup>rd</sup>**—Regional Water Board staff collected water quality samples in the New River at the International Boundary for analysis at a local laboratory. [*Abid Khalaf, WRCE; and Jose Figueroa, WRCE*]
- **May 18<sup>th</sup>**—Regional Water Board staff celebrated Supervising WRCE Mary Serra's retirement from state service with a luncheon in the office conference room. Ms. Serra worked at the State Board, Region 5, and for the last 4 and ½ years in Region 7 as Division Chief for Groundwater Protection. Her last day in the office was May 19, 2017.
- **May 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>**—Jose L. Angel attended the Management Coordinating Committee meeting in Sacramento. The main issues discussed during the meeting were updates on Budget Change Proposals, Discretionary Contract Funding, and status of Statewide policy under development by the State Water Board, including the proposed policy and general WDRs for cannabis. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **May 24<sup>th</sup>**—Regional water Board staff held the All-staff meeting. The meeting was facilitated by Jose Angel. The main topics discussed during the meeting were a summary of and feedback on the May 19<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, preparations for the June 30<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, upcoming Board workshops, and status of key projects in the office. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]

## Office Visitors and Public Records Act Request

During the month of May, the Regional Water Board received and responded to 13 PRAs; and it had 36 visitors.